



Book Review

Global Inequalities in World-System Perspective: Theoretical Debates and Methodological Innovations. Manuela Boatca, Andrea Komlosy, and Hans-Heinrich Nolte, eds. 2017. New York: Routledge. 222 pages, ISBN 978-1-1381-0678-9. Paper (\$38.95)

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This is the first of four volumes that are based on the papers presented at the 39th Annual Conference of the Political Economy of the World-System (PEWS) section of the American Sociological Association (ASA), held in Berlin in April 2015. The conference's theme was "Global Inequalities: Hegemonic Shifts and Regional Differentiation." This volume focuses on theoretical debates and methodological innovations related to global inequalities from a world-system perspective. As the PEWS section struggles with questions of intellectual identity and its *raison d'être* within the ASA, this volume highlights both the strengths (creative and thoughtful essays on the persistent inequality of the modern capitalist system) and the shortcomings of the world-systems literature (the lack of essays dealing with questions of race and gender vis-à-vis structures of inequality).

The editors of the volume have organized the eleven essays into four sections: Semiperipheries in the World-System; Global Stratification and the State; Developments on and From Europe's Eastern Periphery; and Future Prospects. All of the essays focus on or highlight changes within the capitalist world-system, particularly changes brought on by and/or within



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semiperipheral countries. The essays are primarily conceptual, but also include empirical studies such as the chapter on migration by Vilna Bashi Treitler, and the one on wealth accumulation by Scott Albrecht and Patricio Korzeniewicz.

The first part of the book includes essays by David Smith, Hartmut Elsenhans, and Antonio Gelis-Filho. Wallerstein's concept of core-semiperiphery-periphery is an essential aspect of the world-system perspective, yet there is not much consensus on how to empirically measure a country's position in the global division of labor. Smith's chapter provides an excellent overview of the existing literature on the topic. It is presented as a contentious issue in which world-systems scholars fall into one of two camps: the attributional measurement camp, e.g. Arrighi and Drangel (1986) or the relational one, e.g. Nemeth and Smith (1985). Smith, as a representative of the relational camp, argues that attributional measurements produce "questionable results" that lack "face validity" (8). Consequently, a relational or network analysis approach to determining world-system position is the most empirically sound. Of course, Arrighi (1990) claimed that unequal exchange had nothing to do with trade network positionality. Smith also argues that there can be anywhere from three but "of course, less than 20!" zones (15); world-system trimodality is therefore not sacrosanct. Smith asserts, like Chase-Dunn (2014), that Wallerstein's three zone structure of core-semiperiphery-periphery is meant to be understood as a simple heuristic.

Trimodality or not, the causes of upward and downward mobility in the hierarchical world-system are consequential (see Arrighi, Silver, and Brewer 2003 for an example of this debate), and Elsenhans addresses the issue in his chapter. He makes an ideological argument for a post-Marxist approach in which country growth is not solely dependent on capital accumulation. For Elsenhans, emerging technologies play a substantial role in productivity growth.

In his chapter, Antonio Gelis-Filho presents a clever interpretation of the semiperiphery, which he calls the "abandonat"—a loose, semiperipheral social group characterized by its strong support and identification with the values of the countries in the core. The abandonat is not only the core's "geo-cultural police" (36); it also serves as its cheerleader. This conceptualization of the semiperiphery has its roots in Immanuel Wallerstein's (1974b, 1974a) early works on world-system stability brought on by cultural stratification. As Gelis-Filho correctly notes, this topic warrants further exploration.

Juho T. Korhonen leads part two of the volume with a three-case study essay, which deals with integration into the world-system in a post-socialist context. The essay weaves together issues of knowledge production and state-making projects in Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Tanzania—countries that have appeared to be in transition for a quarter of a century. For Korhonen, there is a discrepancy between the promise of statehood and the demands on the world-economy that can be understood through the concept of agonistics of potentiality—that is, looking not toward the past

(as is typical in world-systems scholarship), but to the current condition under which the state making projects are being undertaken.

Vilna Bashi Treitler's chapter contributes to a growing literature (see Korzeniewicz and Moran 2009, or Zolberg 2006) on migration as a response to global inequality. Unlike Korzeniewicz and Moran (2009) who begin and keep their analysis within a global structural context, Treitler uses in-depth interviews of people from the Eastern Caribbean to examine connections within transnational networks in Canada, the U.S. and the UK. Migration is shown as strategic and reduces inequality via geographic, labor market, and housing mobility. However, she concludes that network activities pose no long-term and permanent redistributive solutions to global inequality.

Zenonas Norkus begins his discussion of semiperipheral expansion, similar to Smith, by pointing to network analysis' tendency to find multiple "mega classes" (78) (i.e. more than one core, periphery, semiperiphery). He argues that the total number of semiperipheral states grow during periods of long-cycles, and calls for a new approach to understanding this fundamental change. For Norkus, increasingly, the semiperiphery is becoming more heterogeneous, and he therefore calls for an analysis that accounts for the differences between social actors which he claims should be interpreted as categorical class divisions. This chapter is an excellent complement to Smith's and probably would have been better suited for part one of the volume.

Scott Albrecht and Patricio Korzeniewicz's chapter provides an empirical study of the growth of billionaires and how they fared in the great recession of 2008 and beyond. The chapter is couched in Joseph Schumpeter's (1942) notion of creative destruction (capitalism's tendency to continuously destroy the economic structures within it, while simultaneously creating new ones), but from a world-systems perspective (an approach also taken by Arrighi [1990]). Their work finds that the net worth of billionaires increased exponentially in the last decade. More interestingly, they document an increasing occurrence of billionaires outside the core. They correlate the increasing numbers of billionaires within the semiperiphery with national economic growth in those countries. The findings here are similar to those of Dunaway and Clelland (2015), who found an increasing number of transnational capitalists in the semiperiphery, and in China in particular. It also supports the idea that semiperipheral regions are "seedbeds of change" (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997), ripe with transformational actors.

Part three of the volume focuses on Eastern Europe. Dariusz Adamczyk's chapter touches on world-systems positionality and mobility (Arrighi et al. 2003; Chase-Dunn, Kawano, and Brewer 2000). The author discusses Poland's development and 'catching up' within the world-system hierarchy, rightly pointing out that questions of how to generate industrial growth no longer make sense. Adamczyk's approach is to examine the internal factors specific to Poland, as well as the external determinants resulting from world-system dynamics, that allowed the country to "catch-

up”/develop. This essay is a good counter to the criticism that the world-systems approach ignores the within-country forces that spur change.

The discussion on world-system positionality and development continues with Tamás Geröcs and András Pinkasz’s chapter. They question whether the international division of labor induces reindustrialization in Eastern Europe, creating spaces for semiperipheral development. The chapter focuses on Hungary and demonstrates the importance of access to capital and technology for development. According to Geröcs and Pinkasz these factors allow for the integration of Hungary into Europe while also creating dependency and continued uneven development.

The final chapter in part three, by Dmitry Ivanov, is an innovative one that calls for temporal/spatial analysis of inequality using the concept of glam capitalism. He calls for an approach that not only considers the North-South divide, but also the gap between the super-urban (largest cities) and the rest of the world. Ivanov describes a changing nature of inequality, which takes the form of institutional inequality (based on social status); networked inequality (based on cultural identity); and, flow inequality (based on spatial and temporal mobility/creativity). Hence inequality occurs through unequal exclusion rather than unequal exchange.

Part four is Immanuel Wallerstein’s keynote address at the conference. In his essay, Wallerstein portrays a divided Global Left floundering to effectively manage worldwide anti-systemic struggles, unable to shift the world order to one that is more democratic and egalitarian. His point of entry for this discussion is the world revolution of 1848. He argues that as a result of this world revolution, conservatives persuaded the Left that more radical changes were occurring while making steady but ultimately minor concessions to liberal and radical demands for social and institutional change. This forced both radicals and liberals to adopt a more institutionalized, centrist position and tactics in their anti-systemic agitations. Wallerstein seems pessimistic, describing a polarized world where the Global Left and Global Right are desperately seeking to direct the inevitable new world order.

This volume showcases original essays that treat fundamental questions in world-systems analysis and is an excellent text for those interested in global and structural inequality. However, it highlights some of the major criticisms the PEWS section currently faces within the rank and file of its membership. Questions of race and gender, which play significantly into structures of inequality, both globally and within national contexts, are peripheral to the discussions in this volume, with only Gelis-Filho and Treitler raising the role of racism in structural inequality. Striking too, is the fact that despite two of the three editors being women (who did not contribute as authors to this volume), only one chapter is written by a female colleague. The editors mention that there are three other volumes (one on migration, one on coloniality of power, and one on religion) still to come, so there is hope that these issues will be adequately addressed in those future

collections. Still, this volume would make a good text for upper-division courses on the world-systems perspective and/or global stratification.

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